

Community Toolkit

- Business Support for Youth Programs
- Creating an Education Program and Hiring Youth Outreach Staff
 - Creating Youth Recognition Awards/Scholarships
 - Developing a Youth Training/Leadership Program
 - Involving Young People in the Election Process
 - Mentoring Students and Visiting Schools
 - **Setting up Internship Programs**
- Working with Youth to Address Specific Community Issues or Needs
 - Youth Philanthropy
- Youth on School, Municipal, and Advisory Boards / Councils

The Maine Department of Education's
Citizenship Education Task Force

and

CAMPAIGN FOR THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS



2006

While it is extremely important to encourage and educate our young people about the importance of civic engagement, it is equally important to give them the opportunity to put their knowledge to use. Internship programs may be most commonly associated with college students looking to gain experience before entering the work force, but the same kind of program can be used for young people to gain life experiences within their communities. By creating internships for young people to work with community representatives, business leaders, or local non-profit organizations, we can help to build a sense of belonging and purpose. They will gain important communication skills through reading, writing, and meeting with their employer, build self-confidence, and find where they belong within their communities.

Portland Intern Program

The city of Portland has developed an internship program that works with numerous city businesses and the surrounding schools to provide young people with the opportunity to break into the working world and to begin their lives as civically engaged and motivated citizens. The city works a different number of interns each year depending on funding and the interest for the positions.

This year, one intern is a Portland High School student who lends his time to three different community programs:

- *East Deering/Presumpscot Asset Builders Project*—The program is designed to reduce juvenile delinquency and encourage positive, intergenerational community relationships.
- *Minority Health Program*—This program focuses on eliminating health disparities and inequities for the major 12 minority groups in the city of Portland.
- *TREK*—The Tobacco Resistance Education for Kids program, which is funded under the Healthy Portland/Healthy Maine Partnership, develops peer-based education programs to discuss the dangers of tobacco use and youth-directed marketing tactics.

So far during the internship, the Portland High School student has participated in door-to-door data collection, aided in the planning of a soccer tournament for the Festival of Nations, and helped with office work and coordinating contact lists for events.

This student was chosen to be an intern by a Portland Mentoring Alliance Coordinator at Portland High School because of his participation in the Upward Bound program at the University of Southern Maine and his involvement in the high school's mentoring group. According to Gloria Thomas, Portland's Director of Human Resources, "compensation for the students is funded in the human resources budget, and this internship program is the only funded program of its kind in the city. We are business partners with Portland High and have interest in exposing young people to careers in public service."

Maine State Government Summer Internship Program

The Maine State Government Summer Internship Program began in 1967 (enacted by the 103rd Legislature, Public Law, Chapter 493) with the aim of attracting ambitious and talented college students for experience within State Government. The full-time, 12-week, paid term combines work experience with an educational program designed to give students the opportunity to actively participate in and contribute to Maine State Government.

Each year students submit applications and state agencies place their specific requests for a summer intern. The availability and types of positions vary each year depending upon agency funding and the agencies' particular needs for the summer. Interns are then selected by a committee consisting of members from Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center, various state agency professionals, and faculty from public and private colleges in Maine. Students are selected on the basis of academic performance, educational experience, work experience, and student goals and aspirations.

Both the supervisors and the interns benefit. In fact, most supervisors report interns having exceeded their expectations. Similarly, the interns note their personal and professional successes:

“It helped me to develop professional skills that I would not have otherwise gained from a summer job.”

I have a strong conviction that what I did this summer was important and provided me with valuable experience for and insight into the working world. I'll feel more confident as I apply to various jobs / grad schools next year.”

Past internship locations have included West Boothbay Harbor, Portland, Bangor, and Aroostook County. However, most of the students are placed within the Augusta Capital area (Gardiner, Hallowell). In 2005, thirty-eight Maine State Government Interns were placed in fourteen different state agencies. Some of the projects ranged from GIS mapping to highway studies, research on women's employment issues, website development, organizing and distributing surveys, performing audits and writing emergency plans.

Midcoast Magnet Summer Intern Program 2006

In 2006 Midcoast Magnet, the non-profit economic development powerhouse of the midcoast, will begin their first Summer Intern Program in a effort to connect eager and talented college students with innovative businesses and organizations from Belfast to Rockland. The internship program was developed as a response to a community need identified in their 2006 Report to the Community: “Not only do we need to attract and retain talented and innovative people, we need to connect them to the resources of the community...to create a vibrant and sustainable economy.” The internships will give students an opportunity to develop career opportunities in the midcoast region while businesses get an extra hand and a burst of energy on new projects.

Ideas and Suggestions for Implementation

There are many similar terms used to describe the way young adults are interact professionally with the older adults in their community: youth service, youth involvement, service-learning, apprenticeships and internships. All of these describe some form of a youth-adult partnership where both parties work together, share power, and learn from one another while building a stronger community.

Traditionally, youth and adult interactions have been thought in terms of the parent / child relationship or the teacher / student relationship. More and more adults have to redefine their relationship with young adults as they become accepting to the idea of working with youth as partners.

"While the strategies for working with teens may differ from those you would use with adults, there are fundamental principles that should be followed when working with both. The bottom line is that teens want to be respected for their ideas, their perspectives and their time. They don't want to be treated as kids and they don't want to feel as if they have been used." - Ellen Feighery, Stanford Health Promotion Resource Center

What are the benefits of youth-adult partnerships?

A survey conducted by the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development (a division of the National 4-H Council) showed that involving young people in decision-making helps them to build problem-solving skills, social competencies like communication, gives a sense of identity and autonomy, and builds an overall sense of purpose.

While youth learn valuable life skills, adults benefit by seeing them as valid contributors to the community. Some of other ways adults profit are by understanding the needs & concerns of youth, gaining new ideas and different perspectives, sharing knowledge, and increasing their creativity. Advocates of youth / adults partnerships assert that some programs are more sustainable and effective when youth are involved. Consider the following benefits youth have on organizations: (1) youth can help bring clarity & focus to an organization's mission; (2) the organization is more connected to youth in the community; (3) greater value is placed on youth inclusion and representation; and (4) the organization builds the reputation of being truly committed to youth.

What is a youth-adult partnership?

Youth-adult partnerships are founded on the belief that young people have the right to participate in programs and help shape policies that will serve them. Adults see youth as partners who enrich the experience and who helps to enrich the experiences of youths. A true partnership is mutually respectful and is one that allows both sides to make suggestions and decisions that are recognized and valued.

For adults to share the decision-making power with youth means adults must have confidence in young people's judgment, respect their input, and recognize youth as assets. For a partnership to work, adults may need to embrace change, be willing to provide additional support and training, and modify their notion of what works and

doesn't work. Youth will need to adapt as well in order to understand the limitations and realities of a program or organization's development, operation, and evaluation.

What are the ways in which youth can be involved in a program or organization?

There are a many ways to engage youth in leadership and in decision-making. No one model is *the* model. Different models work in different programs. The following outlines a few types of models that have been used in service-learning programs. Further reading for each model provides the following: a brief description, advantages of that approach, implementation steps, and examples (see "Youth Voice: A Guide for Engaging Young People in Leadership and Decision-Making in Service-Learning Programs"). A few models include:

- Youth as Planners
- Youth as Trainers
- Youth as Evaluators
- Youth as Policy Makers

What are the elements of effective youth-adult partnerships?

Organizational Capacity

- Establish clear goals, expectations, and responsibilities for youth and adults.
- Ensure commitment to youth-adult partnerships from all levels of organization.
- Provide support for youth through mentorship and skills-building opportunities.
- Ensure that mentors have time, energy, and resources to supervise youth adequately.
- Ensure flexible meeting times for youth and provide free food or transportation if necessary.
- Monitor needs of youth and adults regularly.

Attitude Shift

- Address misconceptions and biases that youth and adults have about each other.
- Be open to changing attitudes and building skills in working with youth and adults.
- Be aware of different styles of communication.
- Value the skills and experiences of both youth and adults.
- Use training to diminish stereotypes and facilitate collaboration.

Level of Participation

- Assess the current level of youth participation in the organization.
- Determine ways that youth can be involved meaningfully and integrally.
- Ensure that youth are involved in all stages and levels of an organization.
- Avoid tokenism.
- Ensure that youth have ownership and influence in decision-making.

What are some of the logistical and organizational barriers?

Many adults see the need for meaningful youth engagement in organizational policymaking, and young people want more significant involvement. Still the process of creating and sustaining a youth / adult partnership can be difficult. A big challenge is the newness of the partnership concept. The implementation process can be hindered if both parties are hesitant and fear failure from the other. Logistical issues that may need to be resolved include (see Advocates for Youth for more detail on the following items):

- Hours for Meetings and Work
- Transportation
- Food
- Equipment and Support
- Procedures and Policies
- Training

What are some quick tips for a youth /adult partnership?

For Youth

- Do speak up!
- Do invite adults to share their skills, experiences, and resources.
- Do commit time and energy to do the work.
- Do take responsibility seriously.
- Do seek to involve other youth.
- Don't stereotype adults.
- Don't assume all adults will treat you like "you're just a kid."

For Adults

- Do involve youth in the decisionmaking that affects their lives.
- Do listen—really listen to youth and be willing to learn from them.
- Do provide youth with information and training they need to succeed.
- Do be thoughtful about the special consideration and support that is necessary when involving young people. They may need rides to meetings, or may need meetings scheduled to accommodate school hours.
- Do plan meetings so that everyone feels welcome.
- Don't stereotype youth.
- Don't blame all youth for the actions of one individual youth.¹

¹ This section compiled from publications with the following organizations: National Service-Learning Partnership; Education Commission of the States; YouthNet; Advocates for Youth; and Youth Activism.

Case Study Resources

Anne Tricomi
**East Deering/Presumpscot
Neighborhood Asset Builders
Program**
Health & Human Services Department
389 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 40101
207-756-8053
act@portlandmaine.gov
[http://www.portlandmaine.gov/hhs/phpo
rtlandasset.asp#child](http://www.portlandmaine.gov/hhs/phpo
rtlandasset.asp#child)

Charles Morris
**Maine State Government Internship
Program**
Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center
University of Maine
5715 Coburn Hall
Orono, Maine 04469-5715
207-581-1646
mesc@umit.maine.edu
[http://www.umaine.edu/MCSC/MeSGIP
.htm](http://www.umaine.edu/MCSC/MeSGIP
.htm)

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313 Main Street, Ste 204
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<http://www.midcoastmagnet.com>

Additional Resources

Sometimes, to get involved all you have to do is let a group know you are interested. A well-established organization can connect you with more resources, opportunities, and allies. Adults can open doors through their personal contacts with policy and community leaders. Organizations such as the local United Way, Chambers of Commerce, Maine State Agencies, Historical Societies, Theaters, and Museums are great resources to approach when looking for an internship. Below are a few organizations and businesses that provide and/or support internships.

Americorps VISTA Projects in Maine

Americorps VISTA is a full-time, paid, one year period of service. VISTA's live in the community in which they serve. VISTA members are placed with non-profit organizations whose mission is to address poverty issues by promoting the growth and development of children and youth in Maine. There are 40 different VISTA positions across the state. <http://www.mainevista.net/>

Berry, Dunn, McNeil & Parker

Internships are planned during the months of February to April, and June to August, to maximize exposure to client-oriented work. Internships are offered in auditing and in tax to help focus an eventual career in public accounting. Those students who have had a successful internship are given a higher priority for full-time employment. Maine locations are in Portland and Bangor.
<http://www.bdmp.com/page.asp?type=page&id=172>

Environment Maine

The Environment Maine Internship Program bridges classroom studies with real world experiences. Interns learn to use a variety of skills to advance the Environment Maine campaigns, from generating news media to organizing public forums to educate the public about our campaigns. The internships fall into three categories: research, grassroots and media. <http://environmentmaine.org/index.html>

Hannaford

Hannaford is much more than bagging groceries and stocking shelves. They are looking at the best schools to recruit talent. Their College Recruitment Program offers Corporate Summer Internships, a Pharmacy Program, and a Management Training Program. See their site for intern stories from Maine students. http://www.hannaford.com/Contents/Our_Company/Careers/College/index.shtml

The Jackson Laboratory

The Jackson Laboratory offers educational programs for scientists at various stages in their careers - from talented high school students to experienced researchers. The nationally renowned Summer Student Program provides high school and college students with an opportunity to conduct independent research under the guidance of staff scientists. Other opportunities include an academic-year internship program for local high school students, an academic-year program for undergraduates, thesis research opportunities for graduate students, a cooperative Ph.D. program with the University of Maine, and a training program. <http://www.jax.org/education/index.html>

Libra Future Fund

The Libra Future Fund was created to capitalize upon the energy and creativity that Maine's young people embody and to combat youth out-migration by supporting initiatives that increase the number of Maine-based professional opportunities. Grants are awarded to individuals to promote economic development or create job opportunities in Maine. They are also exploring opportunities to fund summer interns at various businesses in Maine. <http://www.librafoundation.org/LFF.htm>

Maine Audubon

Maine Audubon works to conserve Maine's wildlife and wildlife habitat by engaging people of all ages in education, conservation and action. They offer internships too. <http://www.maineaudubon.org/about/employ.shtml>

Maine Career Advantage Program

The Maine Career Advantage Program is an educational opportunity program that helps students prepare for the world of work by combining academics with an internship at a work site in a related career field. http://www.maine.gov/newsletter/Sept2001/maine_career_advantage_program.htm , <http://mca.mtcs.net/>

Maine Medical Center

The MMCRI Summer Student Research Program is for college and pre-college students who are interested in biomedical research as a career. Students receive a stipend, and have the opportunity to participate in lecture series, seminars, and data review sessions at the Institute. The program is intended to help Maine students pursue careers in biomedical research, and it is hoped that some of those students will return to Maine. http://www.mainehealth.org/mmc_body.cfm?id=1065

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association

MOFGA's apprenticeship Program helps to connect apprentices with farmers who need help on the farm and are eager to share their experience and knowledge. <http://www.mofga.org/index.html>

Maine Women's Policy Center (Linda Smith Dyer Fellowship)

The Linda Smith Dyer Fellowship supports an internship by a Law Student from the University of Maine School of Law to work at the Maine Women's Policy Center on public policy initiatives and projects relating to Maine women and girls. <http://www.mainewomen.org/lindaMWPC.htm>

Media WORKS Enterprise

Located in Bangor, this multi-media design studio is also a learning company where young people can serve as Interns to learn and to produce in one of the most compelling, creative and demanding contemporary workplaces. The design and teaching staff integrate experienced professionals with youth Interns. www.imediaworks.org

MERITS Program

MERITS, the Maine Research Internships for Teachers and Students, is a program that strengthens research opportunities for Maine's teachers and students interested in science and technology by placing them in laboratory or field settings. Since, MERITS has provided summer and school year opportunities to hundreds of teachers and students at more than 70 businesses and non-profit laboratories across Maine. Currently the program is at a stand-still, awaiting funding from the state legislature. <http://www.fbr.org/edu/merits/index.html>

The National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped

The National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped, Inc. (NTWH) is a non-profit organization that provides the disabled community with the communication skills necessary to pursue a life in professional theatre and enhance their opportunities in the workplace. The NTWH-Crosby School in Belfast, Maine offers internship opportunities to Bachelors or Master degree recipients and/or candidates in related field (i.e. performing and fine arts, physical therapy, occupational therapy, therapeutic recreation, social services, or education). http://www.ntwh.org/courses_internships.html

The New England Council

The New England Council is an alliance of businesses, colleges and universities, non-profits and other organizations dedicated to promoting economic development and a high quality of life in the six-state region. The Washington Summer Scholars Award is a summer stipend of \$2,000 for housing and expenses to six selected undergraduate students who have obtained an internship in a New England delegation congressional office in order to gain valuable exposure to the inner-workings of our federal government. <http://www.newenglandcouncil.com/summerScholars.php>

Pine Tree Legal Assistance

Pine Tree Legal Assistance is a statewide legal services organization in Maine. Summer internships last 10-12 weeks and are unpaid. Students are encouraged to apply for fellowships from their law schools and other available sources. Pine Tree assists the interns in securing a public interest fellowship from their law school wherever possible. <http://www.ptla.org/index.html>

Schoodic Education and Research Center (SERC)

SERC is part of a network of National Park Service research learning centers located throughout the United States. The centers are designed to expand the role of research within America's national parks; allow for more informed, science-based management decision-making; and share research results with researchers, local communities, students, educators, and the public. Visit their site for information on internship programs in Bar Harbor. <http://www.nps.gov/acad/serc/internships.htm>

Student Conservation Association

The Student Conservation Association offers 3-to-12 month, expense-paid internship opportunities in all 50 states, in more than 50 professional fields with the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, and state and local agencies, among others. <http://www.thesca.org/>

Toxics Action Center

Toxics Action Center is always looking for dedicated individuals to provide assistance to residents and neighborhood groups fighting toxic pollution in their communities. Internships are offered in Portland, Maine on the following themes: Recycling, Pesticides, and Landfills Intern, and Conference Organizer. <http://www.toxicsaction.org/opportunities.htm#intern>

U.S. Representatives and Senators

Search the Maine government website for information on U.S. Representatives and Senators. Internships are offered for their Maine and D.C. offices. <http://www.maine.gov>

Youthlinks

Youthlinks is a nonprofit organization providing community service learning and enrichment programs for youth ages 11-17 throughout midcoast Maine. Internships are offered in the following areas: Cultivating Connections Youth program, Community Garden, Animalinks program, and the Seniorlinks program. <http://www.youthlinksonline.org/index.html>